

PLEADING PRAYER

NO. 1969

A SERMON

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Remember the word unto your servant, upon which you have caused me to hope.”

Psalms 119:49.

THE one hundred and nineteenth Psalm is a very wonderful composition. Its expressions are many as the waves, but its testimony is one as the sea. It deals all along with the same subject, and it consists, as you observe, of a vast number of verses, some of which are very similar to others, and yet throughout the one hundred and seventy-six stanzas the same thought is not repeated. There is always a shade of difference even when the color of the thought appears to be the same.

Some have said that in it there is an absence of variety, but that is merely the observation of those who have not studied it. I have weighed each word, and looked at each syllable with lengthened meditation, and I bear witness that this sacred song has no tautology in it, but is charmingly varied from beginning to end. Its variety is that of a kaleidoscope, from a few objects a boundless variation is produced.

In the kaleidoscope you look once, and there is a strangely beautiful form. You shift the glass a very little, and another shape, equally delicate and beautiful, is before your eyes. So it is here. What you see is the same, and yet never the same, it is the same truth, but it is always placed in a new light, put in a new connection, or in some way or other invested with freshness.

I do not believe that any other subject but a heavenly one would have allowed of such a psalm being written upon it, for the things of this world are soon spun out. Neither could such a handling have been given to the subject by any mind less than divine. Inspiration alone can account for the fullness and freshness of this Psalm.

The best compositions of men are soon exhausted. They are cisterns and not springing fountains. You enjoy them very much at the first acquaintance and you think you could hear them a hundred times over, but you could not. You soon find them wearisome. Very speedily a man eats too much honey, even children at last are cloyed with sweets. All human books grow stale after a time, but with the Word of God the desire to know increases, and the more you know of it the less you think you know. The Book grows upon you. As you dive into its depths, you have a growing perception of the infinity which remains unexplored. You are still sighing to know more of that which it is your bliss to know.

This wonderful Psalm, from its great length, helps us to wonder at the immensity of Scripture. From its keeping to one subject, it helps us to adore the unity of Scripture, for it is but one. Yet, from the many turns it gives to the same thought, it helps you to see the variety of Scripture. How manifold are the words and thoughts of God! In His Word, just as in creation, the wonders of His skill are manifold indeed.

I admire in this Psalm very greatly the singular amalgam that we have of testimony, of prayer, and of praise. In one verse the Psalmist bears witness, in a second verse he praises, in a third verse he prays. It is an incense made up of many spices, but they are wonderfully compounded and worked together, so as to form one perfect sweetness. You would not like to have one-third of the psalm composed of prayer—marked up to the sixtieth verse, for instance, and then another part made up exclusively of praise, and yet a third portion of unmixed testimony. It is best to have all these divinely-sweet ingredients intermixed and worked into a sacred unity, as you have them in this thrice-hallowed Psalm.

My text is a prayer, but there is testimony in it, and there is a measure of praise in it too. In this single text there is the same mixing up of sweet perfumes as there is in the whole Psalm. May God give us grace to be in such a state of heart that we may enter into the prayer of the text! Wherein it bears grateful testimony, may we be able to join in that testimony! Wherein it praises God, may we also extol Him with all our hearts!

There are only two things that I can attempt to speak about at this time. I cannot bring forth from so rich a casket all its treasures. The first is, *the prayer*, “Remember the word unto your servant, upon which you have caused me to hope,” and secondly, *the plea of the prayer*. It is a three-fold plea, as I think—it is Your word, I am Your servant, and You have caused me to hope in it. Come, Holy Spirit, and bless our meditation!

I. First, then, THE PRAYER. David prays, “Remember the word unto your servant.”

“Remember.” *That prayer is spoken after the manner of men*, for God cannot forget. It would be a very low conception of His omniscience if we imagined that anything passed away from His knowledge. We see things as they come one after the other in a procession, but God is in a position from which He sees all at once. A man traveling through England sees a portion at a time, but he that looks at a map sees the whole country present before him there and then.

God sees everything as now. Nothing is past, nothing is future to Him. He sees things that are not as though they were, and the things that shall be as though they had been. God does not forget, and therefore the text speaks only in a certain restricted sense, and must be understood after the manner of men. Beloved, after what other manner could we speak? God has not taught us to speak after the manner of God. How could we? We are not divine. There is a language above, which Paul heard, of which he said that it was not lawful for a man to utter it.

Men must speak after the manner of men, and each sort of a man must speak after his own manner. Do not therefore let us censure a young brother when he utters a prayer which is very natural from him, though it sounds strange to us. Let us not condemn him because his language is not strictly accurate, for though it may jar upon our ear, the Lord may be well-pleased with it. You are intelligent, and educated, and a full-grown Christian, and the childish language of a beginner may jar upon your ear, but you must bear the jarring, for the Lord bears much more from you and others of His children.

If the language is natural to the new convert, and flows from his heart, he speaks after the manner and according to the manner of men, which manner is always faulty. You do no better if judged from God’s point of view. We are far too apt to make men offenders for words. Certainly God might make the best of His servants offenders for the best of their words if He pleased.

In such a case as this He might have caught up His servant David sharply, and said, “Remember? Do you say ‘Remember’ to Me? Do you imagine that I can forget? And do you take it upon yourself to speak unto the eternal God, and say to Him ‘Remember’?” Yet there is no fault found with that prayer.

On the contrary, it is a prayer that the Holy Spirit Himself inspired, and the Holy Ghost has recorded it, and put it in this Psalm as a pattern, that we may pray after the same fashion. I guarantee you that, if our prayers were gauged according to the standard of language which is used by angels before the eternal throne, they would seem very, very poor things, full of faulty expressions. But God does not measure them so, for though we speak after the manner of men, it is much to our comfort that God loves the manner of men, for it is the manner of His Only-begotten Son.

It is thus that Jesus spake, and the Lord, in our feeble tones, which in themselves might be open to censure, hears the language of the Son of man, and for His dear sake He does not condemn our speaking after the manner of men. He permits us so to speak, for He Himself knows how to read between the lines. He takes the meaning of our groans and tears, and when we fail to express ourselves suitably in words, He reads our hearts, and accepts our secret meanings. I think I am warranted in making these remarks upon this expression of the prayer, “Remember the word unto your servant,” and I hope they will furnish comfort to those of you who have very slender gifts of utterance when you approach the mercy seat.

I do not, however, conceal from myself the fact that *it is language which has some trace of unbelief in it*. Perhaps no unbelief was in the Psalmist's heart at the time, but it is language fit for the lip of one who has not always been at all times a firm and unstaggering believer. It does look as if the thought that the Lord might forget had crossed the pleader's soul. It does look as if, even though it had not been tolerated—for faith had cast it out—yet the suggestion had knocked at the door of the mind, saying, “My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God.”

We do not say to another person, “Remember,” unless there is at least the apprehension of the possibility of forgetfulness. David could not quite mean, when he came to think it over, that he really thought that God would forget, but we usually speak in haste when we speak in unbelief, and then we do not measure what we say. Unbelief is the hurry of the soul.

A regenerate soul sitting still, and correctly weighing the whole question between the eternal faithfulness of God and the passing troubles of life, cannot be long in coming to a confident conclusion. There is a hurry about our cares and anxieties, and in our hurry we are apt to rush to the foolish conclusion that the Lord may forget us. O poor worried child, if you are so foolish as to allow so absurd a fear to enter your bosom, your Father would sooner that you should express your apprehension to Him than hide it in your heart! A smothered fire is always dangerous. Rake it out. If you have the suspicion that you may be forgotten, pray right honestly, “Remember the word unto your servant.”

These prayers are placed in Scripture on purpose that they may be expressions of what we are half afraid to express. The dread is really there, and God sees it, and He tutors us to give it vent. With groanings that cannot be uttered, His Spirit helps us, but sometimes He helps us another way, namely, by helping us to utter those groanings. He encourages us to express what at first we dared not utter. So we are helped to say, “Remember the word,” though we blush to think that it ever should have occurred to us that God could forget.

Let us look at the prayer again, “Remember the word unto your servant.” *The intention of him who prayed this prayer was to ask God to remember His word by fulfilling it.* That is the real meaning of it, as when a servant sometimes says, “I hope you will remember me.” Yes, we will remember him, but that is not quite what he means. Those who speak thus hope that we will give them some token of remembrance—some practical proof that we remember them.

So does this prayer mean, “Lord, let me not only be in Your thoughts, but let me be in Your acts! You have promised to supply my needs, remember me by supplying my needs. You have promised to forgive my sin, remember me by giving me a sense of pardon. You have promised to help Your servant, and give me strength according to my day, remember Your word by fulfilling Your word, and granting strength to me according as I have need of it.”

Now, beloved, this is very legitimate praying, in fact, it is the very essence of prayer to put God in mind of what He has promised. You can never pray an inch beyond the tether of the promise with any assurance of being heard. For my own part, I always feel on sure ground with God when I can quote His own words. I feel then that I may ask boldly, and I need not put in, “If it is Your will,” and those other reservations, because, if His promise were not His will, He would not have spoken it.

There is the promise in His word, and I know that He put it there as the index of what He intended to give and to do, and as an invitation to His child to plead with Him about those very things which He has so indicated, and say to Him, “Now, Lord, do as You have said.” Therefore I follow the line the Lord has marked out for me, and I expect Him to do as He has said.

It is a grand thing, when you are pleading with any man, to bring his own handwriting before him. You have then a hold upon him of the firmest kind. You have his promise in black and white, and he cannot run back from that. The intent of God in giving us the promise, as it were, in black and white, in His own handwriting, is that He may be inquired of by us to do those very things which He has engaged Himself to do.

Ungodly men cannot make out what prayer is. “Do you suppose,” they say, “that you can change the will of God?” We reply to them—We never supposed anything of the kind, but we suppose that our

prayer is the shadow of a coming blessing. As “coming events cast their shadows before them,” so, when God is about to bless us, He moves us to pray for that very blessing. If it were possible to shut out the man’s shadow, we could not expect the man to enter, and if it were possible to shut out prayer from our soul, we should feel at the same time that we had shut out the blessing.

Our Lord is pleased to duplicate His mercies. The blessing itself is great, but it is an equal blessing to be made to pray for it. It frequently does a child more good to get a favor from his father than the favor itself brings him. If the father sets him some little task to do, if he says, “Now, my child, prove to me that this will be a good thing,” the mental exercise, the pleading, the asking, may be as useful in the child’s education as the thing for which he asks. I say, again, our God doubles His blessings by making His servants pray for them.

Prayer, then, is nothing more than this—my believingly remembering that God has promised a certain blessing and then my reminding Him that He has promised it. It is not supposable that He will forget, but He would have me act towards Him as if He might forget, in order that by such an exercise I myself may come to value the blessing, and may be stirred up to persistency and fervor. The prayer is a right one when we say, “Remember the word unto your servant,” it is, in fact, what God always intends prayer to be, a reminding our heavenly Father of His promise.

Sometimes this word “remember,” is very fitly used, because *it seems to the mind that God is likely to remember something else which would be to our loss*. Suppose you and I have been walking contrary to God—and sometimes His people do walk contrary to Him—then the Lord may remember our sin, and He may begin to deal with us in a way of chastisement, and lay us very low. Then is the time to come in with this prayer, “Remember the word unto your servant.”

It is as much as to say, “Albeit that my sins clamor in Your ears, and cry out that You should smite me, yet remember Your word of promise, of pardon, of pity, of power, and let me live. I admit, my gracious Lord, that if You do listen to the voice of my actions, they proclaim me to be most ungrateful. If You do listen to my feebleness in prayer, it will accuse me of want of earnestness, and therefore, You may be inclined to deny it to me. All my forgetfulnesses, and shortcomings, and transgressions, cry out against me. If You hear these, my Lord, You may well reach for the rod, and smite me again, and again, but oh, be deaf to these voices, and hear only the music of Your own word!—

*‘Not my sins, O Lord, remember,
Not Your own avenger be.
But, for Your great tender mercies,
Savior, God, remember me!’*

Remember *Your* word, and forget *my* words. Remember the word whereon You have caused me to hope, and forget the things wherein I have caused You to be angry. I know You might well remember my sins, as You did the sins of Israel in the wilderness, and say, ‘They shall not enter into my rest,’ but I beseech You do not so. You might hear my provocations and my unbeliefs, and say, ‘You shall die in the wilderness,’ but, O my God, as Moses pleaded Your covenant with You, so do I plead with You, not for my sake, but for Your word’s sake, not for my sake, but for Your promise’ sake, and Your covenant’s sake. I beseech You, fail not Your servant, but bear with me still, till You shall bring me into the rest which you have promised me.”

You see, then, the singular appropriateness of the expression, though at first it might seem to be a questionable one. “Remember the word unto your servant.” Brethren, the great mercy to us is, that *God has a very strong memory*. Towards His people He has a memory so strong that He has said, “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget you.”

What a strong memory that is which is stronger than the memory of a mother towards the babe at her breast! Oh, blessed memory of God! “Yet will I not forget you. Behold, I have graven you,” He says,

“upon the palms of my hands.” There is no forgetting a thing that is written on the palms of your hands. You cannot do any work but you see it there, and God cannot do any work without seeing His children’s names. He can do no work of judgment without seeing their names, and therefore He spares His people. He can do no work of bounty but what their names are on His hands, and therefore He says, “Surely, blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.”

His hands are branded with the names of His beloved, and it is not possible that He can forget them. The Lord has a loving memory. He cannot forget His own. Think of words like these, “I remember you, the love of your espousals,” “O Israel, you shall not be forgotten of me,” “The LORD your God will not forsake you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which he swore unto them.”

And then, *our God has a long memory*. How many ages were it before Christ came, and yet His coming was always on the Lord’s mind! The fullness of time had not yet arrived, and yet the Lord did not forget it, for no sooner did the clock strike than that very night—they did not wait till the morning—a multitude of the heavenly host recognized the sign, and their praise flowed forth in a cataract of delightful song, which filled the midnight air. They sang, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” Christ was born to the very moment when God decreed that He should be born. The weeks were ended, the dispensation closed, and lo, He came! God has a very exact and punctual memory.

Recollect when Israel came out of Egypt, “*the same day*” did the Lord lead them forth. The Lord glories in the exactness of the hour. I know some persons, who would never leave a bill unpaid for a day, and as for their rent, they are ready before twelve o’clock strikes, and they say, “My landlord has never had to wait. I was always at the door to the moment.” You shall find that God, though He never is before His time, yet never is too late. He has a very exact memory—a memory about little things, and about moments of time, and He keeps touch with His servants even to the jots and tittles of the word which He has given.

He has, beloved, *a very gracious memory* towards His people, because it is strong in certain matters, but in love He makes it very weak in other points. He says, “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” He hath forgotten their transgressions and cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. All the strength of the Lord’s memory that might have gone in the direction of noting our evil deeds runs the other way. He is all the more powerful to remember us for good because He will never remember our evil as long as He lives. Beloved, the Lord thinks upon you to do you good.

Speaking after the manner of men, He schemes, and plots, and plans to do His people good. He says that He will bless us with His whole heart and with His whole soul. That is a wonderful expression. Let me give you the precise text, “Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul.” Think of God blessing His people with His whole heart, rejoicing over them to do them good. “The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous,” and the heart of the Lord is occupied with the cases of His own people. Blessed be His dear name, we have very much to appeal to when we pray, “Remember the word unto your servant, upon which you have caused me to hope.”

II. The time flies too quickly and therefore let me mention, in the second place, THE PLEAS WHICH THE PSALMIST USES.

The first is, “Remember *the word*.” It is a blessed plea—the word, for by the word upon which God had caused His servant to hope is meant God’s word. He never makes His people to hope in anybody else’s word. It is in the Lord’s word that the hope of His people finds support. Let us consider the power, the dignity, the glory of that word. This is the greatest of all grounds of assurance.

I have already said that you cannot have a greater hold upon a man than when you have his own word to plead. “Remember *the word*.” God is sovereign. He has the right to do absolutely as He wills. “Who shall stay his hand, or say unto him, What are you doing?” But God—let us speak with reverence—when He gives a promise, binds Himself with cords of His own making. He binds Himself down to such and such a course when He says that such and such a thing shall be. Hence, when you

grasp the promise, you get a hold on God. Wondrous fact! Marvelous that we should be able, as it were, to move the arm that moves the stars, and to hold the King who holds the waters in the hollow of His hand!

If You have His promise for it, God must give you the blessing. God can sooner cease to be than cease to be true. "He is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent. Has he said, and shall he not do it?" There is nothing on earth, there is nothing in heaven, half as steadfast as the simple, naked word of God. How mighty is this plea, when you present before the Lord His own sacred word!

It is a royal word. We do not expect kings to play fast and loose with words. They say, "If honor were banished from all the rest of mankind, it ought still to find a refuge in the breast of kings." But what shall I say of "the King eternal, immortal, invisible"? Will He lie? Do you suspect the one "Blessed and only Potentate," the King of kings and Lord of lords? How you insult His majesty if you dream that He can falsify His solemn pledge, and break His word! "Where the word of a king is, there is power," because there is faithfulness at the back of it.

But it is more than a royal word, brethren. It is an irrevocable word. Man has to eat his words, sometimes, and unsay his say. He would perform his engagement, but he cannot. It is not that he is unfaithful, but that he is unable. Now this is never so with God. His word never returns to Him void. Go, find you the snowflakes winging their way like white doves back to heaven! Go, find the drops of rain rising upward like diamonds flung up from the hand of a mighty man to find a lodging place in the cloud from which they fell! Until the snow and the rain return to heaven, and mock the ground which they promised to bless, the word of God shall never return to Him void.

What He has promised shall be, and what He has revealed shall surely be accomplished, for be sure of this—God has never spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth, so as to revoke a single word which He has spoken aforetime. He has never disannulled one of His ordinances, or cancelled one of His promises. Stands the everlasting decree, firm as the throne of JEHOVAH and the promise is as unfailing as the decree.

Not only is it an irrevocable word, but it is an almighty word. Recollect, brethren, that by the word of God were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them, and it is by His word that all things consist. You and I are most foolish when we want something more to rest upon than the word of God. My great trouble in battling with anxious inquirers is that they demand needless evidences, and cry out for marks and tokens. And I have to put it to them very plainly, "Then I suppose God is a liar, and you will not believe Him unless He brings evidence to support His word. You are obliged to run out of doors to find proof of what He says, and you will not believe it unless you get that proof." It is too much so with us.

I tell you, sirs, that the bare word of God is better than all the proofs, and evidences, and signs, and marks that could be heaped together throughout eternity, and what is more, I will say that, if all the marks, and tokens, and signs, and evidences, and promises, and oaths of men all said, "No," if God says, "Yes," His lonely "Yes" surpasses all the "Noes" and all the other denials that could possibly be gathered together.

Our faith ought to give God credit for this, for the Lord God cannot be otherwise than true. We must not suppose such a thing. Unlimited faith is no more than God deserves. He cannot err or fail. "The heavens are not clean in his sight, and his angels he charged with folly," and He charged them with it not without reason, for all things compared with Him are folly, and the greatest of intellects are but fools compared with God. With Him there cannot possibly be a failure or a falsehood. Oh, that we had power to grasp His word as it ought to be grasped! Our hope lies there.

Are you hungry tonight? Has it even come to this? And have you God's promise that you shall be fed? Then you shall be fed, you shall be fed. The devil comes to you, and he says, "Yes, you may be fed, but you must do a wrong action in order to get the food." He speaks to the Son of God again, and he says, "Command that these stones be made bread." Listen not to him, but believe God. Now is your time

to glorify God. A faith that can believe over a hungry belly is faith indeed, yet it is only such a faith as is due to God. God will abundantly justify all the trust we repose in Him.

Tell the devil, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." There is nutriment in God's word. There is everything in that word. The creature owes its power to bless and nourish to the will of God, and if the creature be absent, the will of God can still achieve its purpose by His word without the creature. I put this in a very strong light, but I am certain that I go no further than God's word will warrant. Oh for grace to plead the promise and to rest upon it!

Beloved when you are praying in time of trouble, what a blessed plea for you, "Lord, remember the word! You have said in Your word, 'When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.'" He will remember it. You may forget the word of the Lord, but He does not, and when you plead it, the answer of peace shall come to your soul, "I do earnestly remember you still."

Though the Lord chastens you, yet He does not forget you. His chastisement is proof that He thinks of you. He will not set you as Admah, nor make you as Zeboim, for everlasting love cannot forget the objects of its choice. He chooses us for His love, and loves us for His choice. Therefore, plead well His word.

The second plea lies in the words, "*Your servant.*" "Remember the word unto your servant." A man is bound to keep his word to anybody and everybody, but sometimes there may be special persons with whom a failure would be peculiarly dishonorable. Among the rest, a man must be true to his servant.

Notice, first, "Remember the word unto your servant," means this, "Lord, it is Your grace that has made me Your servant. I was once an outcast. I was once Your enemy. Lord, I did not come to You, but You did come to me. I did not seek employment at Your hands. I was too wicked for that, but You did seek me. It was Your grace that made me Your servant. Now, Lord, have You brought me to be Your servant to put me to shame? You have done the greater thing for me, will You not do the less? To take me into Your service was great condescension on Your part, will You not grant me my rations? Will You not find me my livery? Will You not be gracious to me?" This is good pleading, is it not?

Again, here is a further plea. A servant has a claim upon his master. We dare say it very reverently, that we have a claim upon God when we are His servants. Of course, that claim is only such as He allows, and it is founded alone on grace, but still it is a strong plea with our gracious Master. He was thought to be an evil man who left his servant to perish when he was sick. He could do no more work, and so his cruel owner left him by the way to die.

No good master would do that. Lord, will You do that with me? When I grow sick, will You forsake me? When I grow old, will You desert me? When I cannot speak in Your name any longer, will You disown me? When I cannot stand any longer by reason of feebleness, will You throw me on one side? When I lie gasping upon my death bed, will You say, "I have had his best days, but I will leave him now"? The supposition would be blasphemous. It cannot be. O my brother, our God will not leave us!

When the old man's heart cries, "O God, You have taught me from my youth, and hitherto I have declared Your wondrous works. Now also when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not." The Lord answers, "Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." Our heavenly Lord is not like that Amalekite master who left his Egyptian servant in the field because he was ill. Let us not imagine such a thing.

There is this further plea. If a man sets his servants such and such a work to do, is he not bound to find them the means of doing it? Only a cruel task-master compels men to make bricks, and gives them no straw to mingle with the clay. We are not dealing with Pharaoh, remember, we are dealing with JEHOVAH, who acts on quite another principle. Beloved, the Lord never sent any one of His soldiers to warfare at His own charges.

How frequently, when my Master sends me to the front, I have to cry to Him, "Lord, grant me fresh supplies! Lord, send on the ammunition! I must have powder. I must have funds and grace, and guidance! Lord, send fresh men! Fill up the ranks as one after another falls on the field!" I find Him

always ready with His reinforcements, and His succors, and His stores. There is no failure of commissariat with God. He takes good care of His fighting servants, and His suffering servants, His plowing servants, and His sowing servants, and so you would expect Him to do. A good master will not set his servant a hard task beyond his strength, and then refuse to lift a hand to help him. That would be far from the God of infinite mercy.

Now, dear sister, you that have begun to teach in the Sunday school, and feel that you are hardly equal to it, the Lord will help you. Go on. Do not give up. You that have been trying to preach in the villages, but who do not see any good coming of it, and are half inclined to run away, stand to your guns. Cry to the Lord for more strength, and He will help you. And let this be the plea, "Lord, remember the word unto your servant, for I am Your servant, Lord. I desire to be wholly Yours. I give myself to You, body, soul, and spirit, and my cry is, 'Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.' I am Your servant. My ear is bored to the doorpost, and I would never quit Your service, or labor for another."

You know what the old man-servant said, in the olden time, when his master angrily said, "We must part, John." "I hope not, sir. Where are you going?" He had no intention to go himself. "Ah," said his master, "I do not intend to employ you any longer." The old servant is said to have answered, "Sir, if you have not a good servant, I know that I have a good master, and I do not mean to leave him. I cannot think of going away." It is a grand thing to feel that you are not going away from God—that you have such a good Master that you are going to cling to the posts of His door, and if He puts you out by the front door, you mean to come in at the back. Let the Lord do what He pleases, I am forever bound to belong to Him only.

Brother, resolve that if you cannot preach for your Lord, you will hear for Him, and if You cannot be a leader of the church, you will be a follower somewhere, but your Lord you will serve forever. This, then, is one of the pleas. "Remember the word unto your servant."

The last plea I shall offer but a few words upon. "*Upon which you have caused me to hope.*" Lord, I have been hoping on Your word and I have acted upon that hope. I believe the word to be true, and I have pledged the truth of it. That is good pleading. A man has given me a bill—not a transaction I ever have anything to do with, but suppose such a thing. Suppose I go and discount it, I say, "My friend, you must honor that bill because I have received the cash for it. Do not fail to meet it."

It is as if we said to our God, "Lord, You have caused me to hope upon this promise of Yours. I have been raising present comfort upon the credit of it. I felt so sure that it would be fulfilled that I have taken it into the market, and I have been living upon its proceeds by hoping on it." See how David went and discounted the promissory note. He encouraged himself by it. Turn to the verses which follow my text and you will see.

"This is my comfort in my affliction: for your word has quickened me." He had been comforting himself by the promise, and if the promise failed, that comfort would turn out to be a sheer delusion. Will the Lord delude those who trust Him? Read the next verse, "The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from your law." I stuck to Your doctrine, Your precept, Your promise. I declared Your word to be true, will You not keep it, and so vindicate my confident assurance? "I remembered Your judgments of old, O Lord. and have comforted myself."

I have thus derived strength and establishment out of Your promises already. Will You allow the enemy to tell me that I have deceived myself? Will You revoke Your declarations? It cannot be. What is more, "Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." I have been singing Your promise over. I feel so sure of it that, before it has been fulfilled, I have been singing about it. Lord, shall I be made a fool of by having sung for nothing? Again, "I have remembered your name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept your law." I rose in the night to bless You for Your promises. I sat up in my bed, and clapped my hands with delight, because You have given this promise, and laid it home to my heart. Shall it not come true?

Ah, beloved! You may rest assured of this—your faith never went beyond the goodness of Your God, and it never will. If You believe great things of Him, He will do greater things than You believe. He will do exceeding abundantly above what You ask, or even think.

This is wonderfully blessed pleading. “You have caused me to hope; therefore, O LORD, remember Your word!” When I read how God kept His promise to His people of old, I said, “He will keep it to me,” and when I remembered how He had kept other promises to me in past times, I said, “He will keep this also.” His former dealings have induced us to trust in Him. If He had not been so gracious to us on former occasions, we would never have expected to be heard this time, but His love in times past compels us to trust Him now.

“Lord, You have caused me to hope—my hope is of Your creating, nourishing, and perfecting. I am justified in hoping in You on this occasion from what You have done for me in days gone by. This hope of mine is the work of Your Holy Spirit in my soul. Can Your Holy Spirit make a poor soul hope for that which He will never receive? Can Your Holy Spirit tantalize me by exciting a hope which is never to be fulfilled? You have caused me to hope. It was Your word, and I was Your servant, and I believe Your word, and Your Spirit helped me to go from faith to hope, and now, when the windows of hope are opened, will You not be pleased to send in a messenger of grace and peace?” O needy child of God, go home, and plead in this fashion, and you shall not return empty!

Have you come into a position from which there seems to be no escape? Do not ask to escape, but cry, “Remember the word unto your servant, upon which you have caused me to hope.”

You, poor sinner over yonder, that has never found Christ, think of this gracious word, “Him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out.” Lay hold on that loving declaration, and hope in it, and then say, “Lord, remember the word unto your servant, upon which you have caused me to hope.” The Lord bless you all, and give you a joyful hope in His sure promise, for His name’s sake! Amen and amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 119:49-64

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—191, 193, 733

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.